

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON

HISTORICAL BASIS, INVOLVEMENTS, AND VALIDITY OF THE OCTOBER 22, 1844, POSITION

PART VI--RECAPITULATION, CONCLUSIONS, AND AFFIRMATORY STATEMENT

As we have just completed the detailed and technical study, in Parts IV and V, of two of the antecedent dates in the prophetic series--B.C. 457 and 31 A.D.--it is now desirable, in summation, to review rapidly, in serial, tabulated form, the historically connected line of thought running throughout Parts II to V, relating point to point, in order to draw a full-rounded conclusion.

A. Recapitulation of Parts II and III. From the "Introductory Statement of Problem and Purpose" in Part I, we passed progressively, in historical Parts II and III, from those early and essentially sound general positions of the pioneer Millerite leaders, on through a series of progressive corrections of erroneous detail to the ultimately accurate positions of the 7th month movement. These concerned and culminated in the determination of (a) the true beginning and terminal years of the 2300-year period; (b) the true 7th month of the closing year; and (c) the selection of October 22 as the true 10th day of the 7th month ending of the full prophetic period--with its 31 A.D. spring-crucifixion seal. These final conclusions were reached in this wise:

1. Miller and his associates first of all took their stand upon B.C. 457 as the conjoint starting point of the 2300 year-days and its initial 70 weeks--which, they affirm, stand or fall together--because 457 was attested by the vast majority of the highest authorities available, as the date of the decree of the 7th year of Artaxerxes. But at first the Miller leaders all ended the 70th week at the cross, which they placed in 33 A.D., chiefly upon the authority of the astronomer Ferguson. Consequently they terminated the 2300 years in the "Jewish year 1843," which would close in the spring of our Gregorian year 1844.

2. These early inaccuracies were corrected step by step, first by recognizing the Biblically-specified mode of reckoning the Hebrew sacred year, as

championed by the Karaite Jews. This placed it as from April to April--the time of the required "barley harvest new moon" for the month Nisan--instead of the popular reckoning from March to March, following the Rabbinical fixed calendar, which is computed on the position of the new moon nearest the vernal equinox. The Miller group deliberately and intelligently adopted the true Karaite reckoning, rejecting the Rabbinical calendar as not conforming to the Mosaic law. They recognized clearly that the correct placement of the first of the sacred year of necessity determined the accuracy of all subsequent sacred festivals of the year, particularly the Passover and the Day of Atonement.

3. The next correction was to recognize that the prophecy requires a full 490 and 2300 years, dated from the 457 starting point. So they rightly extended these periods into the years 34 and 1844 A.D., respectively, running both spans from autumn to autumn, and realized that all related dates in the prophetic series must harmonize with the terminus of the full period. Thus the way was prepared for the inevitable correction of the crucifixion date.

4. Miller and his associates first fixed upon a 33 A.D. crucifixion because--not having yet seen the true relationship of the cross to the 70th "week," and at first without knowledge of the chronological defect in the 33 crucifixion dating--that date seemed to harmonize with their early understanding of the requirements of the series, as well as being the position of the well-known Ferguson, and other astronomical authorities. In fact, a portion of Ferguson's work was even reprinted by J.V. Himes as part of the standard Adventist literature, so highly was it at first regarded.¹

5. The shifting of the end-year of the 70 weeks, from 33 over to 34, led to a further study of the crucifixion date, and of the meaning of the "midst of the week" specification of the prophecy. By a further study of the Karaite reckoning, they discovered that the only Friday passover coming within the range of Christ's

¹ Himes, Joshua V., "Bible Students Manual of Chronology and Prophecy," Boston, 1841, pp. 20-24.

public ministry was in the year 31 A.D.--this reckoning being based upon the twin stipulations of the barley-harvest and the visual-observation of the new moon for Nisan, operative in the time of Christ.

6. Thus Miller's associates came to see that the 33 crucifixion date had been reached by Ferguson on the mistaken basis that the Rabbins had correctly dated the beginning of the sacred year and its Passover, supposedly in harmony with first century practice. But the fixed calendar of the Rabbins, introduced by Hillel in the fourth century, was demonstrated to be approximately a month too early. Hence the 33 computation for the crucifixion was now recognized as erroneous and impossible.

7. Discovering from astronomy, moreover, that the only April Nisan coming within the circle of the prophetic "week" of years that could have a Friday crucifixion in harmony with the Mosaic law was 31 A.D., they found that in this date every demand was satisfied, and so took their stand uncompromisingly thereupon, with the astronomical support of the learned Hales and complete tables of the moon as their chief authorities. Eusebius of Caesarea, in the 4th century, was cited as concurring in the 31 A.D. crucifixion.²

8. Having fixed upon the correct terminal-year upon the basis of the 2300-year prophetic span, and having rightly fixed upon the crucifixion date--the series now standing as 457, 27-31-34, and 1844--the 7th month leaders determined the precise day on the basis of the 10th day of the 7th month Atonement type, just as the Passover type was exactly fulfilled to the month and day at the 1st advent.

9. Correctly beginning the true first month of the sacred year 1844 with the appearance of the new moon in April, the Millerite scholars knew that the 7th month must begin with the phasis, or appearance of the new moon in October--

² Julius Africanus, of the close of the 3rd century, it may be added, likewise places the crucifixion in 31 A.D. See Fraidl, Franz, "Die Exegese der Siebzig Wochen Daniels," Graz, 1863, pp. 45-48.

that is, after the conjunction on the evening of October 11, as indicated by the current calendar. The choice of October, rather than September, was in harmony with the invariable number of days between the conjunction of Nisan and the conjunction of Tisri, and the similarly constant period from Passover to Atonement. And this dating of Tisri 1 was confirmed by them through a double-checked dating of the moon's phasis in New England and Palestine.

10. The accuracy with which the Millerite scholars were enabled to fix upon October 13 as Tisri 1, sprang from their acquaintance with both the ancient and modern reckoning for the time of translation of the moon, based upon no less authorities than Geminus, Scaliger, and Hales. The Millerite writers discovered that when the moon is fast, or in perigee--as on that 1844 October 13--one day only should be allowed before visibility after her change. In other words, she would become visible on the second evening, October 13. From the logic of this reasoning there was no escape. It was a simple and direct process that all could follow, yet which none could gainsay because of its scientific accuracy.

11. The remarkable accuracy of the reasoning and reckoning of the 7th month movement leaders was disclosed by Exhibits H and I, which showed the correlated relationship, in the problem, of the Biblico-Jewish day to the civil--the Biblical day embracing parts of two civil days. Therein was demonstrated astronomically the identification of Tisri 1 with October 13--and consequently of Tisri 10 with October 22, 1844, and so scientifically attesting the fundamental Millerite contention.

Summation: Parts II and III disclose the profound influence exerted upon the 1844 advent movement by the adoption of the Karaite mode of reckoning the sacred year, with its attendant festivals, as the divinely-appointed unit of measurement for the 2300-year master-prophecy. Finding the correct beginning of the year and the right dating of the crucifixion, these 1844 students of prophecy were led unerringly on to October 22 as the goal of their quest.

Yet, the Karaite reckoning was but simple adherence to the known laws of

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--5.

astronomy and the Mosaic specifications. Its computation was both sound and accurate, and the resultant conclusions true and inescapable. Having been called back to the supreme Source of authority--the Word of God--leaders in the 7th month movement took their stand firmly upon this mandate. They probably never had an actual Karaite calendar before them for the year 1844, for they make no allusion to possessing or using such. And it was not needed--for the simple reason that their conclusions were drawn from the fact that Karaism differed from Rabbanism as regards the all-important barley harvest in its relation to the Passover, and its governing power over the intercalary month.

The understanding and discussion of these intricate astronomical problems by Millerite scholars was at once profound and scientific. They knew thoroughly the reasons for their positions, and fearlessly took their stand in the face of a hostile, scoffing world. The passage of time, and the appraising tests of scientific investigation only substantiate and fortify the fundamental conclusions.

Quite apart, however, from demonstrating that the Millerites rightly understood and consistently applied the Karaite reckoning, what is of infinitely more importance to us as a people, is that we are shown through Parts II and V that the Karaite mode of reckoning this true sacred year, month, and day, was intrinsically correct, and the Millerite conclusion valid. Verily, October 22 was the prophetically required tenth day of the 7th month of the end-year of the 2300-year prophecy!

B. Summary of Conclusions from Parts IV³. In Part IV, in establishing the certainty of 457 as the 7th year of Artaxerxes and the true beginning of the 2300-day prophecy, the following points, in resume, have been developed in the line of technical proof:

1. For purposes of chronology, as proved by the various synchronisms between Biblical and profane dates, the entire last year of a king's reign in

³ This resume of Part IV was prepared by L.H.Wood.--L.E.F.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--6.

Babylon, Persia, or Israel, is given to that monarch, which year is also called the "accession year" of the following ruler--the next year being the first year of the new king's reign.

2. By use of the well-authenticated eclipses of the 5th year of Nabopolassar and the 7th year of Cambyses, there has been demonstrated both the accuracy of this method, as well as a scientific means of interpreting the terminal years of the reigns of these kings in terms of our calendrical system.

3. By applying these same rules to the reigns of the Persian kings, and constantly checking results by means of "dated contract tablets" and inscriptional records, it has been shown that Xerxes' 21st year was 464 B.C.

4. Similar to the years containing the reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin--each reign less than a year--the death year of Xerxes, the fractional year's reign of the usurper Artabanus, and the accession year of Artaxerxes, are all included in the one year, 464.

5. From a study of Biblical and well-attested archaeological evidence, it has been shown that the Jewish civil year began with the month Tisri in the fall of the year, but that the Babylonian--and Persian--civil year and the Jewish sacred year began with the month Nisan in the spring. But in either case, the months were numbered according to the sacred year, Nisan being the first month, Iyar the second, etc., whether speaking in terms of the civil or sacred year.

6. Whether reckoned according to the Babylonian-Persian system of beginning the year about the time of the vernal equinox, or according to the Jewish system of beginning their same civil year about the time of the preceding autumnal equinox, the time of Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem could not be earlier than the late summer of 457 B.C.

Summation: Thus, by means of abundant evidence from history, astronomy, archaeology, and the Bible, the seventh year of Artaxerxes becomes one of the most thoroughly authenticated dates of all time.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--7.

C. Recapitulation of Argument in Part V.⁴--Because of the fact that up to the present time, the date of the crucifixion has not been established by any generally accepted statement of history, the conclusion set forth in Part V was largely based upon the principles of astronomy and calendrical science. The problem consisted in tying Jewish time in the first century to the Julian calendar. The following special features relating to the luni-solar year of the Hebrews, and some aspects pertaining to prophecy and the gospel narratives of Christ's ministry, constitute the foundation of the argument of this Report relative to the crucifixion date adopted by the 7th month movement leaders.

1. As step one in the procedure, the Jewish passover month Nisan was restored to its appointed place in the spring of the year, as commanded in the Mosaic law. Ancient Israel had no March passover. It was an April-Nisan that began the main Jewish feast period of the year--a period that was always the same length, extending 173 days from the Passover sunset to and including the Day of Atonement, or Tisri 10. According to Biblical specification, it was necessary that the passover feast should occur at the time of the full moon of barley harvest.

This primitive regulation was materially changed by the fixed calendars of both Jews and Christians, in the 4th century A.D., at which time the Jewish passover was appointed by the ambitious Christian Church to be a March feast, as a point from which she wished to regulate her own Easter festival. But March passovers would occur on an entirely different series of week days from April passovers of the same year. Upon this important distinction, the date of the crucifixion depends.

2. As step two, the Passover full moon was placed on the 13th day, near the middle of the Jewish month Nisan, as a fixed position, in contrast to the variable position of the conjunctive black moon, at the end of each month, which has a translation period of from one to four days.

⁴ This resume of Part V was prepared by Miss Grace Amadon.--L.E.F.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--8.

Valuable testimony from history was cited as to the true position of the full moon in the paschal month. Aristobulos, Eusebius, practically all of the patristic writers, and our leading modern authority, agree that the moon fulls on the day before the Passover, when at sunset the sun and moon face each other in the evening sky. In harmony with this, Josephus' much quoted phrase, "according to the moon" can better be understood. Furthermore, the placing of the paschal moon on the 13th day, is the only postulate which really harmonizes with the position of the "new moon day," as it allows a reasonable time for every new moon phasis in a regular cycle. On the contrary, if the paschal moon be made to coincide with the 14th of the month, in some years the translation period would have little more than an hour between conjunction and phasis--an impossible astronomical event.

From the combined testimony of Geminus, Scaliger, and Hevelius, and from the fact that on the walls of the Sanhedrin chamber, in the time of the patriarch Gamaliel, there hung a chart portraying various forms and shapes of the new moon, by which he examined the witnesses, it was concluded that the Jewish mode of computing the translation period of the moon apparently was much more than a mere test for visibility. The cycle of Table IV shows the limits of the period of the translation of the moon to be from twenty-two hours to four days, in contrast to the modern visibility test which allows much less time, or only about twenty to sixty hours. Computation shows that the phasis follows a regular cycle, in harmony with the moon. The double new-moon days and the so-called "postponements" of the modern Jewish calendar--which after all keeps pace with the moon, though the reasons therefor are not the same as in ancient practice--were considered good evidence of the longer time needed to establish the translation period from conjunction to "new moon day."

3. As step three, four passovers were outlined in the life of Christ, according to the gospel narrative.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--9.

4. As step four, the death of Jesus was presented as a complete fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy in Daniel 9--that He was really "cut off" in the "midst" of the seventieth week, as apparently first suggested by Eusebius.

Summation: On the basis of the foregoing stipulations, as outlined in the Bible, history, and the principles of astronomy--that there must be (1) four passovers during the ministry of Christ; (2) a crucifixion fulfilment in the "midst" of Daniel's prophetic 70th week; (3) a passover during the April barley harvest; and also (4) a paschal full moon on Nisan 13, the day before the Passover--only one year between 27 and 31 A.D. offered a Friday Passover. That day was Nisan 14, or April 27, 31 A.D. No other year of the six or seven usually chosen as the passion date satisfies even one of the foregoing counts. The fact that the year 31 A.D. fulfilled all four counts, which concern not only astronomy and the primitive laws of the Jewish nation, but also the demands of the prophecy of Daniel--a feature which one finds included in nearly every ancient and mediaeval treatise on chronology--demonstrated the selection of the year 31 A.D. as final.

While it has been shown to be true that the fragments of ancient history which have come down to the twentieth century fail to agree on any one certain date for the crucifixion of Christ, yet it is equally true and worthy of note that history has not been remiss as a witness, either to prophecy or to the life of Christ, in that she has faithfully recorded the specific rules by which we may compute Jewish time in the first century, and cause this primeval system of chronology to coincide with the common calendar of man.

And in such a manner, on the demands of Scripture, chronology, and history, and by the application of the basic principles of astronomy and the calendar, the position finally taken by the Millerite leaders in the autumn of 1844, as regarding the 31 A.D. crucifixion, has been demonstrated.

D. Closing Affirmatory Statement.--It was He who framed the sun, earth, moon, and stars, projecting them into their appointed courses and holding them there with the precision of Infinity, who ordained their cycles, not merely to rule the day and the night, but as undeviating measuring lines to tell off the great prophetic periods of divine revelation, and thus to signify the crucial epochs of the ages. It was He who, through the centuries, has guided the course of human events according to His own inscrutable scheme and schedule for man's redemption, who, through His prophet Daniel, gave the master key by which to unlock the mystery of the times, that we might understand the unfolding fulfillment of His matchless plan of salvation spanning the centuries, and now nearing its great consummation.

Dated from a decree that can be checked and rechecked by eclipse-marked reigns of Babylonian and Persian monarchs, this prophetic span was certified and sealed by the death of the divine Son of God in the very year marked out by the first fully-dated, 70-week segment of the full prophecy. Christ came as the great antitypical Lamb of God, inerrantly foreshadowed by the passover lamb type, slain on the appointed month and day in the designated Jewish sacred year, to provide the vicarious, atoning sacrifice imperative for man's redemption. All this was accomplished at Christ's first advent, as He appeared on schedule time in humility, to become the predicted Victim of the cross.

Next, we are carried along by this mighty span of allotted years, through the eventful centuries of Christ's post-ascension ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, on to the very year, month, and day when He actually closed the first, and entered upon the second and final phase of Priestly ministry for man--God's great judgment hour--shortly to precede His second advent in glory. These consecutive periods and events, we affirm, have been told off to us by inerrant, time-marking cycles of the sun and moon, together with the concurrent records of man. There has been and can be no mistake in calculation here. And the certainty of it all was sealed by the cross in the midst of the prophetic 70th week.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--II.

Astronomy proves that there has been and can be no lost time.

Established thus by decree at its beginning, and certified by the cross--the greatest event of all past history--this prophetic span came to its appointed close on October 22, 1844, just as it has been traced. This sweeping period, with its specific terminal date, holds more in its amazing portent, and is fraught with greater consequence to man and the universe, than all the ambitious schemes of earthly conquerors, or all the imposing achievements of human statesmen, both the epochs and the events in the divine plan of salvation are disclosed in sequence and relationship. Were this people silent as to the meaning and the actuality of the historical fulfillment of the final point in the series, the very stones must needs cry out--in parallel to Christ's declaration to those who would hush the hosannas of the child heralds before the great tragedy of the cross that certified this mighty end-event of the span, God's judgment hour.

Adventism's Deeper Significance

Such is the deeper significance of the great second advent movement. It is this that underlies its appearance on schedule time in the 19th century. Such is the amazing method, provision, and providence of God, covering time and eternity, and embracing heaven and earth. And such is the wondrous, infallible time-message of the spheres, ordained in the very beginning of human history not only for daily utility, but for signs and seasons and infallible measurements in disclosing the all-embracing, redemptive plan of the ages--for unto 2300 year-days, then shall the heavenly sanctuary be cleansed--with the end of sin's experiment at its close. It was a determinative act of God graciously made known in advance to man. Truly there is a God in heaven in whom we live, and move, and have our being, who is soon to close forever the last page of the troubled book of human history. Solemn but happy, then, the lot of those who sense the amazing meaning of the hour, and are truly giving to mankind heaven's appointed message pertaining to these tremendous times.

Seventh-day Adventists alone are carrying this commissioned sanctuary truth to the world, as based on Daniel 8 and Revelation 14, and they will not fail in faithfulness to their heavenly mandate. This sanctuary truth, with its threefold chronological foundation, is indeed the vital heart of the advent movement and message. In the uncompromising words of Mrs. E.G. White--

"As a people, we should be earnest students of prophecy; we should not rest until we become intelligent in regard to the subject of the sanctuary, which is brought out in the visions of Daniel and John. This subject sheds great light on our present position and work, and gives us unmistakable proof that God has led us in our past experience. . . . Our faith in reference to the messages of the first, second, and third angels was correct. The great way-marks we have passed are immovable. Although the hosts of hell may try to tear them from their foundation, and triumph in the thought that they have succeeded, yet they do not succeed. These pillars of truth stand firm as the eternal hills, unmoved by all the efforts of men combined with those of Satan and his host. We can learn much, and should be constantly searching the ^{fixed} Scriptures to see if these things are so. God's people are now to have their eyes ^{fixed} on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward, where he is interceding for his people."⁵

Such was the firm foundation laid by the 7th month movement heralds of the first angel's message, between August and October, 1844. Such was the sure position maintained and strengthened by the pioneers of the third angel's message as the advancing light on the sanctuary truth explained the nature of the event which had actually transpired on that all-important day in the heavenly sanctuary above, and which now involved the testing truth of the Sabbath. And such is the sound foundation of the great threefold message that is to be proclaimed with ever-increasing power and certainty to the very end of our witness. Seventh-day Adventists took their irrevocable position upon clear evidence, such as is here portrayed. The full recital of the facts has but added luster to the established foundations of truth. Viewed from every angle, the substantiating verities in regard to the sanctuary question stand forth in towering majesty to the honor of God, and the comfort of its friends and adherents.

⁵ White, Ellen, G., Review and Herald, Nov. 27, 1883, p. 737.

Part VI--Recapitulation and Statement--13.

Let there be no confusion or uncertainty upon the sanctuary truth.

Acquaintance with its unassailable proofs, and their full justification before the world and the church, means spiritual confidence and satisfaction of soul, and in consequence, an aggressive forwarding of the banner of truth in the midst of the collapsing standards and growing uncertainties all about us. We are a people with a heavenly message, and a divine mandate to which we must ever adhere with unswerving allegiance.

LeRoy Edwin Froom